



Aalborg Universitet

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Future Dead

Designing Disposal for Both Dead Bodies and Digital Data

Sabra, Jakob Borrits

Publication date:
2016

Document Version
Accepted author manuscript, peer reviewed version

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Sabra, J. B. (2016). *Future Dead: Designing Disposal for Both Dead Bodies and Digital Data*. Abstract from The Futures of End of Life Symposium, Lancaster, United Kingdom. <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/futures-of-the-end-of-life/home/abstracts/>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Abstract for Futures of the End of Life, 2016

Title: Future Dead: Designing Disposal for Both Dead Bodies and Digital Data.

PhD Fellow SABRA, J. B.

Centre for Death and Society, Bath University

Architecture, Design and Media Technology, Aalborg University

Contact: jbsa@create.aau.dk; +4560920036

Today the dying and the bereaved attend memorialization both online and offline. Cemeteries, urns, coffins, graves, memorials, monuments, websites, social network sites, applications and software services, form technologies that are influenced by discourse, culture, public, professional and economic power. They constitute parts of an intricately weaved and interrelated network of practices and designs dealing with death, mourning, memorialization and remembrance (Graham et al. 2015; Gibbs et al. 2015; Graham et al. 2013).

The paper presents findings from two research projects; the 2015 exhibition *Death: The Human Experience* at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery (bristolmuseums.org.uk) and the *Future Cemetery Design Competition 2016* held by the Centre for Death and Society and Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol (futurecemetery.org).

Grounded in sociological theory on death and memorialization technologies (Moncur et al. 2012; Jefferies 2013; Walter 2008), ethnographic fieldwork and survey results (n=348), this paper examines and discuss subjective and collective attitudes and approaches towards death and memorialization technologies, mobilities of death and disposal and the perspectives offered by new digital online solutions and services for memory and legacy.

Based on the research findings the author questions how death and disposal is perceived by a British (urban) public and if death has been liberated from social and individual emotional regulation or is (still) constrained by subjective and/or collective regulation. The design proposals from the Future Cemetery Design Competition 2016 are used to argue the above and reveal insights from the field of practice (art, technology and design) by discussing some of the creative solutions, ideas, scenarios, fictions and concrete examples of how to deal with dead bodies, digital identities and legacy construction in a hyper-connected and digitally mediated society.

Gibbs, M. et al., 2015. # Funeral and Instagram: death, social media, and platform vernacular. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(3), pp.255–268. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369118X.2014.987152> [Accessed February 20, 2015].

Graham, C. et al., 2015. Gravesites and websites: a comparison of memorialisation. *Visual Studies*, 30(1), pp.37–53. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1472586X.2015.996395> [Accessed March 20, 2015].

Graham, C., Gibbs, M. & Aceti, L., 2013. Introduction to the Special Issue on the Death, Afterlife, and Immortality of Bodies and Data. *The Information Society*, 29(3), pp.133–141. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01972243.2013.777296> [Accessed March 3, 2014].

Jefferies, S.P. and J., 2013. Narrating the Digital: The Evolving Memento Mori. In C. Maciel & V. Carvalho Pereira, eds. *Digital Legacy and Interaction*. pp. 83–99.

Moncur, W. et al., 2012. From Death to Final Disposition : Roles of Technology in the Post-Mortem Interval. , pp.531–540.

Walter, T., 2008. The sociology of death. *Sociology Compass*, 2(1), pp.317–336.